



# JOURNEY

January 2007

We wish to emphasize inclusiveness and kinship...to serve others in common journey... to honor fellow-pilgrims in struggles and hopes...to risk toward the possibility, passion and compassion of community—regardless of religious belief, age, gender, race, economic circumstances, or personal orientation...to include the poor and the outcast...to learn from those who choose to share community with us...to celebrate exuberantly in solidarity.

*We welcome you to join us on the journey*



## *Our Life Together*

Fr. Tom

**Gentle ones,**

I write this on January 6, the Feast of the Epiphany...which also happens to be the 39<sup>th</sup> anniversary of my ordination to the priesthood; with all of the **work** [and **JOY**] of what went on in December, it feels like it's my 49<sup>th</sup> anniversary! I guess we're all pretty exhausted [but recovering] at this point...so let me sum up briefly what we saw, felt, and experienced in these last few weeks....



**The Fourteenth Annual O.C.W. Children's Christmas Party**, on December 16<sup>th</sup>, was absolutely **wondrous**! Much of that, of course, was due

to the tender and gracious *outpouring of support of over 250 of YOU* [from all over the country] who offered “adoptions” of these hundreds of kids...and therefore provided unforgettable memories for children who weren't really expecting much of *anything* during this Christmastide—but, instead, found *gifts* [toys, clothing, shoes], plus *clowns, Santa & Ms. Claus, musicians, angels, fairies, drummers, princesses, face-painting, endless cookies & punch, and so much more!*

(We're still collecting *lots of pictures* of the celebration, and we'll have them on the *photo-website* in the next couple of weeks—we hope!)

And, wow, did a LOT of folks help!

♥ We had an entire new crew of volunteers from the *University of Texas/Tyler Nursing School* [yes, Sr. Maria conned them all into the chaos!...]...and these folks worked *many* hours in the weeks *before* the Party—sorting, wrapping, and labeling hundreds of gifts, making costumes, *wearing* costumes—and sometimes just acting silly....

♥ Many “*veterans*” of previous Parties showed up again, offering whatever work and play was most needed at the time....

♥ Five students of the *Culver Academies* flew in from Indiana three days before the Party—and immediately joined in the fray of shopping, wrapping, packing food boxes, and all the rest; as several adults said, “I haven't seen a group of teenagers work *that* hard in a *long* time!”

♥ Working just as hard were several students of *Bishop Gorman High School* in Tyler—who, along with numberless volunteers from the *Tyler Jaycees*, baked over 200 dozen cookies!!!

♥ Absolutely important, too, was the great kindness of the *First Christian Church congregation*, which once again offered their immense facilities for this grand happening.

♥ *The list of volunteers' names seems endless—  
and I'm afraid that I might inadvertently miss one or two—  
but you know who you are...and we*

*THANK YOU*

*heartfully for your great and compassionate work ♥*



On Saturday, December 30, we gathered to celebrate the *last Mass* at St. Dismas House, followed by a *celebration* of our Community's life in that sacred place over the past fourteen years; we shared *memories, food, emotions, and gratitude*...and ended with a Blessing of the property for the new Companions who have purchased it. There were many “old-timers” from the days of the early and late 90s, and so the hugs and stories were especially sweet and poignant. What a wonderful evening....



It was also the month of celebrating the *transition of ownership* of our other Houses to wonderful people who have been “old” or “new”

Companions in our life together...and so we offer  **blessings and happiness** to each and all of them:

“St. Oscar Romero House”—**Nancy & Aurelio** [and children **Wendy, Jimena, Stephany**]

“St. Dorothy Day House”—**Carlos & Gabriela** [and children **Michelle & Carlos, Jr.**]

“MaryHouse”—**Jaime & Maria** [and children **Montserrat, Delia, Kiara**]

“St. Clare House”—**Angela** [and daughter **Abigail**]

“St. Dismas House”—**Matt & Nancy** [and family]

“St. Joseph House”—**Carlos & Maria** [with a baby **girl** due in April!]



In addition, our longtime Resident-Companions from St. Dismas House—**Paul** and **Darius**—have just moved into **Esperance House** at Sanctuary... and we're delighted with that! We will continue Community celebrations at **Sanctuary** and in various **private homes** and **public places** in the future.



We are in the process of moving the **Food Pantry** to a new location, and so we will be temporarily closed for a month or so, while we [as usual] look to Br. Robert to “rearrange” us; we have given our present food supplies to the good folks at **West Erwin Church of Christ**, as they are presently serving meals each week to hundreds of folks.



The new “**Amigas**” program, which organizes and trains low-income folks for employment and/or education is flourishing wonderfully with new English classes...and **Carol** and **Flora** are presently finishing some new grant proposals for the next few months.



And so we continue on, wandering as always, in our journey, offering what we can of ourselves to our fellow pilgrims: daily services—counseling, visitation, presence, etc.—to those who contact us regarding their personal situations...whether those include AIDS, poverty, immigration, spiritual struggles, Recovery, marital differences, medical problems, or any other matters which bring us together with Jesus' own favorites, the poor...poor of heart, poor of body, poor of circumstances, poor of spirit. We're mighty grateful that **you're** willing to go *with* us.....

**Love & Blessings,**

*Fr. Tom*

Office: 903-595-3191

Cell: 903-521-0490 [journev-ocwATearthlink.net](http://journev-ocwATearthlink.net)

**Father Tom's homily at the final Mass at the Chapel of St. Dismas  
Saturday, December 30, 2006**

Hear words from the sixth chapter of Micah:

*"With what shall I come before God,*

*and bow myself before God?*

*Shall I come before God with sacred offerings,*

*with the total of my treasures?*

*Will God be pleased with thousands of sacrificial animals,*

*with ten thousand rivers of holy oil?*

*Shall I sacrifice my dear child for my transgressions,*

*the fruit of my body for the sins of my soul?"*

*God has showed you—you children of God—what is good;*

*what God requires of you is*

*to do justice, and to love kindness,*

*and to walk humbly with your God....*

And listen to the exclamation point added by Henri Nouwen:

*Community is a quality of heart that doesn't exclude anyone—because it's*

*the heart of Christ, the heart of God. Community is a place where we*

*nurture one another and our relation to the Christ, where we forgive one*

*another and come together around the word and sacraments. In*

*community, sorrow and joy are never separate...we hold sorrow and joy*

*connected, and where they are connected is where there's healing, where*

*life bursts forth.*

We are here to say good-bye to a place, *not* to a spirit or a community.

We are here *not* for a funeral but for a celebration of gratitude.

We are here to remember—and carry on—the memories of what has happened in this place during these 4,978 days...including the thousands

of folks who have a part of this journey: those who live with AIDS; those

who struggle in Recovery; those in families seeking better living

conditions; those in prisons and jails; those thousands of children—in the

past fourteen Decembers—who continue to hope that we will not simply

“observe” Christmas, but will *share* Christmas; and those who suffer

discrimination of race, handicaps, sexism, sexual orientation, nationality,

or religious preference.

We are here to remember both death and life, both funerals and births, both

disappointments and discoveries, both baptisms and weddings, both

departures and arrivals, both gifts and sacrifices, both friends and

supposed enemies, both calamities and celebrations, both “mistakes” and

new learnings, both hurt and forgiveness, both listening and sharing, both

speaking and singing, both planting and harvesting, both chapters and

epilogues.

We are here to remember all of those who are a part of us...wherever they are at this moment in time...so that we may continue to carry them in our hearts.

We are here to remember that death and life are parts of the same journey. We are here to remember that God was here before we arrived...and God will be here after we leave.

And we are here to bless this place again for those who will bring their own lives to this sacred ground.

We are here to remember that God is always beckoning us to a *new* place, where God is waiting to welcome us...if we will continue to journey, excluding no one, welcoming everyone...today—and however many tomorrows we may have.

We are here to celebrate what we have been given...and what we may yet receive.

Thanks be to God! Amen.

A great gift for others (or yourself!):  
The poster of "To Follow the Christ"  
[www.orderofchristianworkers.org/pages/5/index.htm](http://www.orderofchristianworkers.org/pages/5/index.htm)

## DID YOU KNOW?

...That the average number of children and adults living in Community ("Resident-Companions") in 2006 was **45** [including *lots* of kids]

...That our Food Pantry provided food for **534** children, women, and men in December, 2006!

...That **no one** in O.C.W. has ever been paid a salary or "perks" for this work and ministry

...That our only means of gaining financial support has always been **begging**

...That it would be very helpful to us (and to *you*, we hope!) in terms of sending these emails to you if you would include these two OCW mailing addresses in **your EMAIL ADDRESS BOOK**:  
[journey-ocw@earthlink.net](mailto:journey-ocw@earthlink.net) and [ocwjourney@yahoo.com](mailto:ocwjourney@yahoo.com).

...That we would *love* to offer prayers of gratitude on your **birth and/or anniversary dates**; simply email us the specifics

...That you can visit the *entire* **O.C.W. website** by going to:  
<http://www.orderofchristianworkers.org>

## ✠ *Your Prayers Are Asked* ✠

✠ For those who struggle through continuing medical, surgical, and spiritual processes: Barb, Wanda, Athalene, Sam, Ryann, Br. Michael, Maya [6 years old], Norma, Lucy ✠ Those courageously in recovery of addictions ✠ Those living with HIV/AIDS ✠ Those who caretake others ✠ Those adults and children who have no home ✠ Those involved in wars throughout the world ✠ Those struggling to transform their lives within the criminal justice system ✠ Our brothers and sisters at Walker House ✠ The women and children at the Crisis Center ✠ The patients, families, and staff at Women's and Pediatric Clinics ✠ The children who are living in poverty and malnutrition, lacking medical care ✠ Those "undocumented" brothers, sisters, and children who share our work and lives ✠ Those who grieve various losses in their lives ✠ Those who care for the children in families, foster care, and institutions ✠ Those who suffer from fear, hate, and prejudice ✠ The families of those who have died from violence, as well as those who are being executed daily ✠ Those who struggle against the rape of Creation ✠ Servant-Leaders and Companions who live in solidarity with OCW throughout the country ✠ Those who give us continuing models of Christ-work: Andre House (Phoenix), Casa Maria (Tucson), Starcross Community (California), and the many Catholic Worker Houses (both Catholic and Roman Catholic) throughout the US and world ✠ Peacemakers and Holy Fools....



## **ARE YOU IN THE PICTURE(S)?**

**Our PHOTO-SHARING WEBSITE [over 200 pictures!]**  
is **really easy to use**: Just go to [www.flickr.com/photos/ocw](http://www.flickr.com/photos/ocw)  
take a look...and (we hope) send us photos to **add** to it.  
The **albums** ("sets") are listed;  
once in a "set," simply put your cursor over a **specific picture**,  
and it will show you the **title** of the picture...  
if you wish, you can click on a picture to **enlarge** it.  
Another great option within an album/"set" is to click on "**view as  
slideshow**"...and then you'll get a **timed sequence** of the photos

in that "set"!

So, please **send us photos!**

For email, send to [journey-ocw@earthlink.net](mailto:journey-ocw@earthlink.net);

by postal mail, send to **OCW, P.O. Box 4155, Tyler, TX 75712-4155.**

## *Prayers of Gratitude*

FOR THOSE COMPANIONS WHO HAVE SO KINDLY OFFERED  
THEIR SUPPORT (FINANCIAL and/or LABOR) TO THIS WORK AND MINISTRY:

This color denotes new contributors in 2006

**TYLER:** Sr. Jane & Leo B.—David & Joan H.—Carole C.—Lawrence A.—Judy D.—Liza E.—Elihu E.—Kathy F.—Belinda G.—Louis G.—Br. Robert H.—Michael C.—Edna H.—Ginny H. & Jeff—Sr. Maria & Fr. Tom—Paul K.—R.S. & Carole K.—Sr. Mary Ann—Kimberly M.—Sandy M.—Jim & Charlette M.—Celia P. & Jeff B.—Leon & Cristina R.—Patrick S.—Donna S.—Lou Anne S.—Brenda M.—Sr. Elise & Ken C.—Sherry V.—Karen W.—Kerry S.—Betty R.—St. Dismas Resident-Companions—Claudia & Otis C.—Our Saviour's Lutheran Church

**TEXAS:** Katy K. (Arlington)—Andrea & Don C. (Athens)—Br. Charles & Sherry (Austin)—Alice P. (Austin)—Bill S. (Austin)—William W. (Austin)—Journey Faith Community (Austin)—Lucille S. (Big Sandy)—James C. (Boerne)—Cheryl & Wayne C. (Bullard)—Will C. (Dallas)—Les & Susan H. (Dallas)—Terry & Pam C. (Dallas)—Alan & Patsy C. (Dallas)—George & Paige L. (Dallas)—Richard M. (Dallas)—Damon & Jennifer S. (Dallas)—John & Susan B. (Elgin)—Linda W. (Ft. Worth)—Carole J. (Ft. Worth)—Eloise M. (Jacksonville)—George L. (Kingsville)—John & Dirje S. (Larue)—Deana B. (Longview)—Betty W. (Murchison)—Bryant & Dinah S. (Palestine)—Margaret G. (Quitman)—Bud & Carol C. (Troup)—Tina & Brian K. (Whitehouse)—Elizabeth W. (Houston)

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**FOREIGN:** Bill M. (Canada)

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## DONORS TO THE ANNUAL CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS PARTY

# Hmmmm....

How do you measure, measure a year?  
In daylight, in sunsets, in midnights, in cups of coffee?  
In inches, in miles, in laughter, in strife?  
In 525,600 minutes—how do you measure a year in the life?  
How about love? How about love? How about love?  
Measure in love.

*[From the musical Rent, lyrics by Jonathan Larson]*

I'd rather see a sermon than hear one any day;  
I'd rather one should walk with me than merely tell the way.  
*[Edgar Guest]*

Some people  
ascend out of our life, some people  
enter our life,  
uninvited and sit down,  
some people  
calmly walk by, some people  
give you a rose,  
or buy you a new car,  
some people  
stand so close to you, some people,  
you've entirely forgotten  
some people, some people  
are actually you,  
some people  
you've never seen at all, some people  
eat asparagus, some people  
are children,  
some people climb up on the roof,  
sit down at table,  
lie around in hammocks, take walks with their red  
umbrella,  
some people look at you,  
some people have never noticed you at all, some people  
want to take your hand, some people  
die during the night,  
some people are other people, some people are you, some people

don't exist,  
some people do.

[Robert Bly]

[www.CommunityPilgrimage.org](http://www.CommunityPilgrimage.org)

*Have you considered what the possibilities might be  
for your  
parish or church or community?*

## Reminders

What would you gain if you were to win the whole world but lose your *self* in the process? [*Jesus of Nazareth*]

This is the kind of fast I'm after: to break the chains of injustice, get rid of exploitation in the workplace, free the oppressed, cancel debts. What I am interested in seeing you do is: sharing your food with the hungry, inviting the homeless poor into your homes, putting clothes on the shivering ill-clad, being available to your own families.... [*Isaiah 58*]

Ask me not where I live or what I like to eat... Ask me what I'm living for, and what I think is keeping me from living fully for that. [*Thomas Merton*]

Is it your spiritual practice—*each day*—to offer *gratitude* for the blessings of your life?

## Information & Schedule

**DONATIONS** to the **Order of Christian Workers** are tax-deductible within the law.

**OUR MAILING ADDRESS:** P.O. Box 4155, Tyler, TX 75712-4155

**OUR E-MAIL ADDRESS:** [journey-ocw@earthlink.net](mailto:journey-ocw@earthlink.net)

**OUR INTERNET ADDRESS:** [www.OrderOfChristianWorkers.org](http://www.OrderOfChristianWorkers.org)

**OFFICE/FR. TOM/SR. MARIA/SANCTUARY:** 903-595-3191 ; fax 903-595-5183

**HIV/AIDS SUPPORT GROUPS** meet twice each week. For information, please call the SHRET office at 903-597-7558.

**WILDWOOD COFFEEHOUSE** (Proceeds to various non-profit organizations)

Unitarian/Universalist Fellowship; for schedule/further info:

[www.geocities.com/uutvlertx/wildwood.html](http://www.geocities.com/uutvlertx/wildwood.html)

**BIRTHDAY AND/OR ANNIVERSARY DATES** (year not important!): We'd love to

offer prayers on those special days. Please send to [journev-ocw@earthlink.net](mailto:journev-ocw@earthlink.net) , or by postal mail.

**PFLAG** (Parents, Families, and Friends of Lesbians & Gays) Further information at 903-330-8901; email address is: [pflageasttexas@yahoo.com](mailto:pflageasttexas@yahoo.com); mailing address: East Texas PFLAG, P. O. Box 130703, Tyler, TX 75713-0703.

## **QUICK-LINKS FOR THE O.C.W. WEBSITE**

**Home Page:**

<http://www.orderofchristianworkers.org/>

**Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs):**

<http://www.orderofchristianworkers.org/faqs.html>

**O.C.W. history:**

<http://www.orderofchristianworkers.org/aboutus/ourhistory.html>

**Our work and ministry:**

<http://www.orderofchristianworkers.org/aboutus/agivenday.html>

**The Annual Children's Christmas Party [for 400 kids]:**

<http://www.orderofchristianworkers.org/thechildren.html>

***Journey* monthly newsletters:**

<http://www.orderofchristianworkers.org/newsphotos/newsletters.html>

**Publications [including some free books!]:**

<http://www.orderofchristianworkers.org/publications.html>

**The "To Follow the Christ" Poster:**

<http://www.orderofchristianworkers.org/theposter.html>

**"Community Pilgrimage" program:**

<http://www.orderofchristianworkers.org/gatherings.html>

**LINKS Page:**

<http://www.orderofchristianworkers.org/links.html>

**Our Prayer List:**

<http://www.orderofchristianworkers.org/aboutus/prayers.html>

**O.C.W. Memorials Page:**

<http://www.orderofchristianworkers.org/aboutus/memorials.html>

## *JOURNEY*

is a monthly expression of the ministry, work, and reflections of the  
Companions of the

### *Order of Christian Workers,*

an ecumenical, non-denominational and charitable gathering of  
God's children.

*Letters or other contributions are always welcome*

P.O. Box 4155, Tyler, TX 75712-4155 903-595-3191 (FAX) 595-5183

[journey-ocw@earthlink.net](mailto:journey-ocw@earthlink.net)

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